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**INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE
FOR THE PROTECTION AND PROMOTION
OF THE DIVERSITY OF CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS**

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REPORT OF THE THIRD CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM

This document presents the conclusions of the third edition of the Civil Society Forum, which was held online on 31 May 2021. These results, which were compiled by Forum participants, were delivered orally to the Conference of Parties at its eighth session (1 – 4 June 2021). The authors are responsible for the choice and presentation of the facts contained in this document and for the opinions expressed therein. These do not necessarily reflect those of the Secretariat or UNESCO and do not commit the Organisation in any way.

Report of the third edition of the Civil Society Forum (2021)

I. Background

The Civil Society Forum is a biennial event that provides an interactive framework, with an adaptable agenda, to enable coordination amongst civil society actors that are active in the fields covered by the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (hereinafter “the Convention”). At its tenth session, the Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions invited Parties to the Convention, the Secretariat and civil society organisations to continue developing mechanisms to strengthen the participation of civil society in the implementation of the Convention, notably through the organisation of a biennial forum (Decision 10.IGC 6). The overarching goal of this Forum is to give civil society representatives a platform to share their experiences and discuss their common concerns, and to provide them with an opportunity to make proposals to the Conference of the Parties on issues or problems that they consider to be priorities and that they would like to see reflected in the work of the Convention’s governing bodies. The first edition of the Civil Society Forum took place on 12 June 2017 and the second on 3 June 2019. The third edition of the Forum was held online on Monday 31 May from 12:30 to 5.45 pm (UTC+2 hours), before the eighth session of the Conference of Parties (1-4 June 2021).

Following a call from civil society representatives for a greater inclusiveness of the Forum towards a larger number of participants, and thanks to additional financial resources that the Secretariat was able to identify, simultaneous interpretation in Arabic, English, French and Spanish was provided during both plenary sessions, and at least in English and French during the thematic sessions. In the exchanges with the Secretariat prior to the Forum, civil society acknowledged the importance of the resources that the Secretariat could identify, including in the support to the graphic design of the Forum concept note in several languages, and stressed the lack of means within civil society to secure a multilingual Forum. Civil society representatives also expressed hope that those means could be included in the Forum budget for its future editions.

100 representatives from 90 organisations participated in the 2021 “online only” edition.

An outcome report with the recommendations was shared at the eighth session of the Conference of Parties on 2 June 2021 by Cornelia Dümcke of International Theatre Institute ITI and ITI Germany.

II. Forum Objectives and Topics

The main goals of the third edition of the Civil Society Forum were as follows

- To provide a space for civil society organisations and professionals interested and/or operating in the fields covered by the 2005 Convention to exchange on challenges and solutions relevant for the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions;
- To enable civil society representatives to formulate joint recommendations to inform the work of the governing bodies of the Convention, and in particular the future activities of the Committee for the 2022- 2023 period;
- To raise awareness on the objectives of the Convention and encourage its implementation amongst a larger community of civil society representatives.

III. Forum Organization

The third edition of the Civil Society Forum built on lessons learned from previous editions of the Forum, as well as on civil society activity reports submitted in 2017 and 2019. Based on a call for volunteers issued to organise the forum, thanks to the coordination of CSOs attending the 14th IGC session, and open to a large database of organisations, 16 civil society organisations came forward to support the organization of the Forum. More CSOs came forward to participate in preparatory sessions in the last week of May to identify the discussion topics for the Forum.

The 16 organisations that volunteered to support the organisation of the Forum are: Arterial Network, Contact Base, Cultura contra conflict, Culture et développement, Culture Funding Watch, Eurovisioni, International Federation of Coalitions for Cultural Diversity and its member coalitions from Chile, France, Mali, Mexico and Portugal, International Council for Film, Television and Audiovisual Communication, International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, International Music Council, and the International Theatre Institute.

As part of preparatory work, consultations were organised between 17-30 May 2021 to launch discussions. Considering the broad spectrum of civil society's activities to protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions, as well as the limited discussion time available during the Forum, presentations and debates aimed to lead to concrete recommendations on key areas covered by the Convention. The group of volunteers came to the conclusion that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenge of inclusion should be transversal discussion themes and identified four main thematic areas for discussion, namely:

- Culture and sustainable development
- Sustainable ecosystems in the cultural and creative sectors
- Civil society participation in the monitoring and implementation of the 2005 Convention, as well as in the work of its governing bodies
- Digital environment, rights, and trade.

Schedule of the sessions

1. 12:30-1:30 pm: Opening, presentation of the objectives of the Forum and summary of the preparatory work (in plenary);
2. 1:45-3:45 pm: Four parallel thematic sessions, during which participants discussed distinct topics and adopted recommendations (break-out groups);
3. 4:00-5:45 pm: Presentation of the work of the break-out groups, discussion regarding the procedures to organize future editions of the Forum, adoption of the recommendations (in plenary)

Session discussions

The **Opening Plenary** was chaired by Laure Gicquel (French Coalition for Cultural Diversity) who was present at the UNESCO headquarters. Co-moderators Silja Fischer (International Music Council) and Valeria Marcolin (Culture et développement) were participating online.

- Breakout Session I: Culture and sustainable development

The session was moderated by Claire McGuire (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions). At first there were presentations by Paige Collins (Freemuse), Ramy Essam (Egypt, IMC Music Rights Champion) and by Jordi Pascual (United Cities

and Local Governments' Committee on Culture) on behalf of the #culture2030goal campaign. The rapporteur was Ananya Bhattacharya (Contact Base). The discussions covered issues such as artistic freedom, freedom of expression, gender equality, social cohesion and well-being, the recognition of culture as the 4th pillar of sustainable development.

- **Breakout Session II: Sustainable ecosystems in the cultural and creative sectors**

The session was moderated by Pierre Claver Mabilia (Arterial Network). The session started with presentations by Garry Neil (Canadian author, scientist, activist) and by Gabriele Rosana (Policy Director, Culture Action Europe). The rapporteur of Session II was Cornelia Dümcke (International Theatre Institute ITI/ ITI Germany). The discussions covered issues such as working conditions, social protection, remuneration and employment status for artists, creators and cultural professionals that have been a subject of debate since more than 50 years.

- **Breakout Session III: Civil society participation in the monitoring and implementation of the 2005 Convention, as well as in the work of its governing bodies**

The session was moderated by Valeria Marcolin (Culture et développement), Luanda Smith (Creatividad y Cultura Glocal A.C.) and Silja Fischer (International Music Council). The rapporteur was Nathalie Guay (International Federation of Coalitions for Cultural Diversity). The discussions covered topics such as improving dialogue at national and regional level with UNESCO Field Offices; measures to support the active participation of civil society in the work of the governing bodies; suggestions for regular follow-up spaces and tools for the implementation of recommendations emerging from the Civil Society Forum and civil society activity reports.

- **Breakout Session IV: Digital environment, rights, and trade**

This session was moderated by Giacomo Mazzone (Eurovisioni). The rapporteur was Laure Gicquel (French Coalition for Cultural Diversity). The discussions covered issues such as the value chain disruption and unfair redistribution of income among actors; digital trade; the need for the governing bodies of the Convention to make sure that the objectives of the Convention are upheld in trade negotiations; preferential treatment for cultural goods and services in the digital environment; digital rights and the threats posed by the digital divide to equal access to a diversity of cultural expressions.

The **Concluding Plenary** allowed the four working groups to present summaries of their discussions and to propose recommendations, which were then adopted by all participants (see below). In addition, two decisions were presented to participants by a group of civil society representatives:

a) *Procedure to appoint the task force in charge of organizing the fourth edition of the Civil Society Forum (2023)*

As it was done for the first and third editions of the Civil Society Forum, held in 2017 and 2021, as well as based on unanimous civil society interventions during the meeting of civil society representatives with the Bureau of the fourteenth session of the Committee, representatives of civil society organisations agree on the principle of a horizontal organisation for the Civil Society Forum. At the latest eight months before the next edition of the Forum (2023), a call for volunteers should be issued by a task force composed of the moderators and rapporteurs of the 2021 Forum. This call for volunteers will be open to all civil society organisations that have been involved in the process. Based on the experience and lessons learned in the framework of the organisation of the third edition of the

Forum in 2021, the organisations that will volunteer to organise the next edition of the Forum will continue to implement and revise, if warranted, a set of procedures that shall be used and submitted to the Forum in 2023 for adoption. Regional preparatory virtual sessions may be organized to reduce linguistic and geographic barriers and to improve the reach of the process. Based on the responses to the call for volunteers, civil society will shape and set up a task force that will be in charge of organizing the fourth edition of the Civil Society Forum in 2023. If there are more candidates than needed, rotation processes (or other forms of non-competitive selection processes) will be established.

b) Civil society coordination for intersessional activities

In line with the conclusions of the first Civil Society Forum, civil society organisations have been strengthening their permanent coordination to contribute to the work of the governing bodies of the Convention. Based on the effective results of this coordination through an informal steering committee, the organisations that have regularly attended the sessions of the Conference of Parties and Intergovernmental Committee in the last three years will launch, after the eighth session of the Conference of Parties, and before the fifteenth session of the Intergovernmental Committee in February 2022, a call for manifestations of interest to contribute to facilitate and animate civil society and coordinate inputs made to the work of the governing bodies of the Convention until the next edition of the Civil Society Forum in 2023. The current members of the global coordination steering committee will proactively facilitate the work and presence of civil society organisations at the next sessions of the Conference of Parties and of the Intergovernmental Committee, as well as during the intersessional period, and will remain in charge until their successors are identified.

IV. Forum Recommendations related to the Thematic Breakout Sessions

a) Breakout session I: Culture and sustainable development

Recommendations to Parties:

1. Carry out full assessment of the cultural and cultural rights damage inflicted by the pandemic, with participation of Government and civil society, so as to inform effective responses;
2. Reinforce the protection of the cultural rights of all and rights of artists and cultural workers as professionals in national and local legislation and facilitating legal support.
3. In times of crisis recognise cultural goods as essential goods at all levels of the cultural value chain. Recognise or re-establish the right of artists and producers of cultural goods to express themselves, to have goods sold and remunerated and right of the public to consume cultural goods, including in times of crisis; consolidate the awareness of the civil society about their cultural rights, which must be respected including in time of crisis.
4. Recognise the importance of the material character of the cultural goods and of a physical accessibility of the public.
5. Fully implement the recommendations contained in the UNESCO publication “Culture in Crisis: Policy Guide for a Resilient Creative Sector”, including with regard to direct and indirect supports for artists and cultural professionals and maintaining

commitments to gender equality with an intersectional perspective, across all culture sectors as well as economic fairness in different cultural and creative industries value chain activities.

6. Urge for the elimination of coercive measures, restrictions on mobility and blockade among states, that impact all artists and to demand the end of wars, sanctions and extraterritorial actions that affect culture and cultural exchange.
7. Encourage support for cultural programmes aiming at education, active participation, critical citizenship, gender equality as well as economic fairness.
8. Ensure the long-term integration of cultural and creative industries across government action at all levels, everywhere, both as an end in itself and as an enabling factor in sustainable development, leaving no one and no place behind.
9. Place welfare, solidarity, economic fairness and sustainability at the centre of short-term and long-term public policies (especially in economic instruments and measures of cultural policy), programmes and projects, as well as making international cooperation, including cultural and creative industries, central in the building of more resilient communities.
10. Incorporate the cultural and creative industries explicitly into the plans, instruments and reporting mechanisms (VNR and VLR) around the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the sustainable development goals (SDGs) to be elaborated in the coming months and years.
11. Fully seize the opportunity to build back better, designing policies that allow culture and creative industries to fulfil its role as the fourth pillar of sustainable development.
12. Pave the way at international level for the inclusion of a goal on culture in the post 2030 international debate on sustainable development, based on the evidence collected through UNESCO, regional, national and local authorities, civil society, academia and the private sector.

Recommendations to UNESCO:

1. Create opportunities for civil society to contribute to the planning and implementation of the Mondiacult Conference, to be held in Mexico in 2022.

Recommendations to all stakeholders:

1. At the global level, appropriate resources and international collaboration mechanisms including cultural cooperation, are critically needed and should recognise existing barriers like closed borders and seek to address them.
2. Acknowledge that cultural participation, a vibrant and inclusive cultural life in communities and access to culture represent a precondition to achieve all SDGs, respecting the 2005 Convention preamble

b) Breakout session II: Sustainable ecosystems in the cultural and creative sectors (CCSs)

Recommendations to Parties:

1. Establish a conceptual framework for the support of artistic and cultural professionals. As the understanding of “sustainable ecosystems in CCSs” includes different perspectives and in general needs deeper conceptual elaboration and further work on the understanding of the term.
2. It is time for a re-definition/re-interpretation of the “status of the artist” in the context of new policy and legal frameworks and of new or changed professions in the CCSs. The transformation of the status of the artist into a status of the cultural workers/cultural entrepreneurs according to the reality of the practice in different artistic and cultural professionals must be better understood.
3. Include culture in countries’ post COVID-10 recovery plans and implement the following targeted support measures on different levels:
 - i. support measures/programmes for the sector or for sub-sectors
 - ii. support measures/programmes for individual professionals working in the sector, in particular self-employed
 - iii. investment in emerging technologies
4. Make better use of “lessons learned” from the current crisis with new policy solutions.
5. Inclusive models of funding and new institutional settings should be better communicated in the interest of a diversity of cultural expressions.
6. The expertise of civil society is urgently needed in all areas where CSOs are active in processes of implementation of the 2005 UNESCO Convention and can complement those interventions that the state and the private sector cannot provide.

c) Breakout Session III: Civil society participation in the implementation of the Convention

Recommendations to Parties:

1. Support the implementation of the 2005 Convention and civil society participation at local and regional levels, notably by developing permanent programmes for information, training and networking platforms to support more structuring processes amongst CSOs and with Parties.
2. Evaluate the possibility to create a label for the support and recognition of projects at the local level that aim at the implementation of the Convention.

Recommendations to Parties and to the Secretariat:

1. Regarding the International Fund for Cultural Diversity (IFCD):
 - Renew the currently fragmented partnerships and federate them under different areas of support
 - Support work at national and regional levels in ongoing programs
 - Pilot projects that could test operating modes in relation to the convention, and/or small and large scale projects schemes,
 - Support civil society investment for on-the-ground promotion and knowledge of civil society

- Support to South-South mobility for the development of cooperation projects
 - Support for the participation of civil society organisations to the meetings of the Convention's governing bodies
 - Work with National Commissions to establish support programs for organizations wishing to submit a project to the IFCD, to provide more information about the IFCD and the selection process and to overcome the language barrier.
 - Establish monitoring mechanisms for the projects supported during their implementation and up to two years after their completion.
2. Recognize that civil society has limited resources to make activity reports and to organize forums such as this one. This needs to be taken into account, especially since there is no formal feedback mechanism.
 3. Involve civil society in research and analysis, including the chapter on civil society in the Global Report, based on calls for manifestations of interest.
 4. Give increased attention to the work of minorities and Indigenous Peoples in the implementation of the convention, including by Indigenous Peoples' organizations, and explore links between the 2005 Convention and the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
 5. Make available a database of civil society organizations that are observers to governing bodies, participating in the quadrennial reports or IFCD beneficiaries, to civil society organizations, among others, so that they can communicate better and develop synergies.

Recommendations to the Committee:

1. Associate civil society in the still important effort to be made to secure a broader ratification of the Convention
2. Regarding the proposed feasibility study on a new cooperation mechanism with the private sector and the proposed new partnerships with cultural institutions, reflect the fact that these segments are already represented in the civil society organisations that participate in the work of the Convention's governing bodies. If necessary, Parties could consider reviewing or clarifying the definition of civil society in the Operational Guidelines related to Article 11 to avoid confusion and take into account evolutions since the adoption of the Convention.

d) Breakout Session IV: Digital environment, rights, and trade

Recommendations to Parties:

1. Regarding the digital environment and rights:
 - Take note of the best practices observed by civil society while implementing the roadmaps.
 - Further use the UNESCO [Internet Universality indicators](#) to ensure meaningful access to cultural content

- Work on implementing the concept of online discoverability of cultural contents while developing the National roadmaps for the implementation of the Convention in the digital environment
 - Invite the UNESCO Secretariat to convey to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU - UN specialized agency, which is “committed to connecting and ensuring inclusive equal access and use of ICT’s for all”) its deep concern regarding the digital divide, and to invite UNESCO to work further with ITU, the UN High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation and other relevant fora and stakeholders
 - Ensure the availability of data on culture in the digital era by adopting measures on data transparency, namely in the context of implementing the roadmap
2. Regarding trade:
- Draft operational guidelines on trade to ensure that the principles of the Convention are taken into account in the trade negotiations conducted by Parties and to ensure cultural exemptions
 - Invite UNESCO and its Director-General to help Parties in their efforts to implement Article 21 in order to be more active in the digital trade debates currently discussed in other international fora
 - Consult civil society to ensure the effective implementation of Article 16 on Preferential Treatment and encourage Parties to report on measures related to preferential treatment in their quadrennial periodic reports

We thank the Secretariat for the support and guidance received to create an effective platform. This third Forum has allowed us to share experiences, formulate joint recommendations to inform the work of the governing bodies of the Convention, and in particular the future activities of the Committee for the 2022-2023 period.

ANNEX

Additional information about the third edition of the Civil Society Forum

1. The full list of participants can be found here: https://en.unesco.org/creativity/sites/creativity/files/provisional_list_of_participants_final.pdf
2. The full concept note for the third edition of the Civil Society Forum can be found here:
 - Arabic: https://en.unesco.org/creativity/sites/creativity/files/civil-society_forum_2021_ar.pdf
 - English: https://en.unesco.org/creativity/sites/creativity/files/civil-society_forum_2021_en.pdf
 - French: https://en.unesco.org/creativity/sites/creativity/files/civil_society_forum_2021_fr.pdf
 - Spanish: https://en.unesco.org/creativity/sites/creativity/files/2021_forum_concept_note_and_agenda_es.pdf